Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

The written description portion of the specification, claims 1-6, and the abstract of the disclosure have been amended. New claims 7-15 have been added. Claims 1-15 are now pending in the application. Claims 1 and 12 are independent. The rejections are respectfully submitted to be obviated in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The specification has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.77(c), for consistency, and to correct any informalities. The abstract has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.72(b). The claims have been amended in general to more fully comply with U.S. practice. New dependent claims 7-11 have been added in response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and recite features of the invention previously presented. New claims 12-15 have been added to further define the scope of protection sought for Applicants' invention. Entry of each of the amendments is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) - Kinoshita

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,247,332 to Kinoshita et al. (hereinafter "Kinoshita").

The rejection of claims 1-6 under § 102(b) based on Kinoshita is respectfully traversed. For at least the following reasons, the disclosure of Kinoshita does not anticipate Applicants' claimed invention.

Kinoshita is directed to a flame retarder having an anti-blooming property. In fact, the Kinoshita patent has been mentioned in the background section at page 1 of the instant specification (i.e., "it describes the impregnation of a surface dried by the influence of heat with a water-soluble, fire-retardant agent"). Kinoshita describes a method of producing fire retardant veneers in which the surface dried by the influence of heat is impregnated with a *water soluble* fire-retardant agent. Kinoshita discloses that the dissolution or deliquescence of the water-soluble flame retardant agent by moisture is completely prevented by coating or covering of the impregnated material with a water resistant or moisture absorption resistant polymer (column 3, lines 11-18).

That is not Applicants' claimed invention. Instant claim 1 defines a method of producing a fire-retardant flat structural member "comprising heating a veneer so as to withdraw from the pores thereof a liquid, and substituting a resin for the withdrawn

liquid." That is, according to Applicants' claimed method, the water in the veneer is replaced with the *resin* by influence of the heating step. By supplying heat to the veneer, the water vapor escaping from the veneer subsequently draws the liquid resin into the pores of the veneer.

Since Kinoshita does not meet each feature of the claimed invention, Kinoshita does not anticipate the invention defined by Applicants' instant claim 1. Claims 2-6 are allowable because they depend from claim 1, and for other reasons.

As indicated above, new claims 12-15 have been added to further define the scope of protection sought for Applicants' invention. New claims 12-15 are also allowable. Independent claim 12 defines an embodiment of the present invention in which the steps of heating and providing the resin are effected under an applied pressure. Support for claim 12 is found in the disclosure at, for example, instant specification page 2, last paragraph. Kinoshita neither anticipates nor would have rendered obvious the method defined by claim 12. Claims 13-15 are allowable because they depend from claim 12, and for other reasons.

In view of the foregoing, this application is now in condition for allowance. If the examiner believes that an
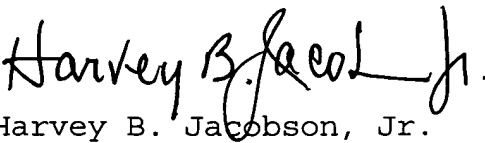
interview might expedite prosecution, the examiner is invited to

contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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